

N. JOINT LETTER TO LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS ON STATE-REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS



STATE OF CALIFORNIA Labor & Workforce Development Agency

GOVERNOR Edmund G. Brown Jr. • SECRETARY Marty Morgenstern

Agricultural Labor Relations Board • California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board
California Workforce Investment Board • Department of Industrial Relations
Employment Development Department • Employment Training Panel

Dear Executive Directors and Local Board Chairs,

The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) within DIR are working hard to help build a prepared California workforce. As part of this effort, DIR and the Labor Workforce and Development Agency Secretary Marty Morgenstern are jointly requesting that all local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) in California include state-registered apprenticeship programs on their Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPL).

According to the California Budget Project's Mapping of the California's Workforce Development System, the DAS accounts for only 0.23 percent of funding from both federal and state funding, yet they graduate an average of 7,580 apprentices per year in a variety of occupations in high-wage sectors. Graduating from an apprenticeship program, the individual is highly employable and most often has a job with the employer they worked for and trained with.

Apprenticeship has a special importance in the workforce development system. Apprenticeship programs are the ideal workforce model to develop "middle skill jobs." Those are jobs that are complicated enough to need at least a year of classroom study and on-the-job training, but do not require a four year degree. Apprenticeship puts an individual on a career path, pays a livable wage and benefits and provides upward mobility.

The current administration needs to be strategic with California's valuable resources. The governor sees the value of state-registered apprenticeship programs in getting industry to develop the labor pool in skilled occupations through a model of talent development that preserves institutional knowledge while growing the next generation of workers. While it is important to support and encourage the building construction trades, the most commonly thought of apprenticeship program, it is also important to leverage this model and expand to other occupations.

Currently, approximately 22,000 of California's 55,000 apprentices are in non-construction occupations. These occupations include firefighters, safety officers, automotive, and heavy mechanical among others. For one successful program, San Diego Trolley, the light rail system in the city, 80 percent of their workforce is a product of their apprenticeship program. There are plans to expand apprenticeship into high-growth, high-demand sectors that include healthcare, transportation and a variety of emerging occupations, but also specific markets, such as San Diego Trolley, where the labor pool is so specialized it is hard to find workers in a particular region. Apprenticeship is a win for the employer, employee and the community.

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There are many benefits for the local WIBs when they include apprenticeship on their Eligible Training Provider List. Apprenticeship is by definition employment and as such counts as a placement for local WIB's obligation to the federal government. Additionally, most programs are paid for by the employer or program sponsor so funding would be partial subsidy as opposed to full support.

Apprenticeship programs run one to five years in duration. For each step of an apprenticeship program, there is a pay increase, a WIB could provide Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding for a limited amount of time and not have to fund the program for the duration for it to be considered a success. WIA funds could act as seed dollars to inspire new employers to start training apprentices and as they see the value and productivity of the apprentice, continue training beyond the time the WIA funding lasts. Apprenticeship leads to permanent unsubsidized employment.

The individual job seeker does not have to leave, or put off joining the workforce in order to train for a meaningful career; he/she is employed immediately. The employer gets a productive employee trained exactly to their needs and specifications and the WIB has another successful job placement program to add to their list of successes.

With these positive outcomes in mind, I ask you to consider accepting state registered apprenticeship programs on your ETPL.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Marty Morgenstern
Secretary of Labor Workforce and Development Agency



Christine Baker
Acting Director, Department of Industrial Relations